



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

www.bethanypreschurch.org

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December 24, 2023 – 11:00 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Love: A Service of Carols and Cookies



"Day 4 Dressed Up to the Nines," Scouse Smurf

You, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way.
You will tell his people how to be saved through the forgiveness of their sins.
Because of our God's deep compassion, the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to
give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide us on the path of peace." Luke 1:76-79 (CEB)

GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Welcome to our service of worship. Although we are worshipping in a variety of locations, we still affirm that God is present in our worship, whether in-person or virtually. Our prayer is that all who worship with us this day will truly feel the presence of God in this time. Know that you are loved and we are so glad you are here! Parts of today's liturgy are from Ruth Burgess, Winter: Liturgical Resources for November, December and January (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2016); Ruth Burgess, Candles and Conifers: Resources for All Saints' and Advent (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2005); and LiturgyLink, <https://www.liturgylink.net>. The story is from Carol A. Wehrheim and Elizabeth F. Caldwell, Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018). The coloring pages are from Illustrated Ministry.

TRINITY CHIMES

PRELUDE: *Song of the Watchman*

EDWARD GRIEG/ARR. BY GEORGE BLAKE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***OPENING HYMN #22:** *Angels From the Realms of Glory*

JAMES MONTGOMERY

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Refrain:

Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light. **(Refrain)**

Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen His natal star. **(Refrain)**

All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One. **(Refrain)**

***OPENING SENTENCES**

"FOR YOU WE WAIT," RUTH BURGESS

God of truth
For you we wait

God of justice
For you we wait

God of loving kindness
For you we wait

We know that you are always near.
Let us worship our God.

OPENING RESPONSE: *O Come, Let Us Adore Him*

O Come, let us adore him
O Come, let us adore him
O Come, let us adore him
Christ the Lord.

For He alone is worthy
For He alone is worthy
For He alone is worthy
Christ the Lord.

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

ELSA PETERS

Today we stoke the fires of God's love. We rejoice that love is within us. It is revealed when we bind up the brokenhearted and comfort those who mourn. We hope that love will blossom in the justice we seek, as the priest Zechariah imagined:

He has granted that we would be rescued from the power of our enemies so that we could serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness in God's eyes, for as long as we live.

O God, we light the fourth candle of Advent.
We light the candle of love.

The fourth candle is lit

We light this candle to spring up with love. In the light and warmth of this candle, we hope that love continues to grow in all of our hearts as we celebrate the coming of Christmas.

Let us pray together:

Loving God, pour into our hearts this day the light of your love, warming us to one another, enlightening our understanding of others, and blooming abundantly as only our love can, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, our joy and strength,
by the power of your Spirit
prepare the way in our hearts
for the coming of your Word,
so that we may see the glorious signs
of your promise fulfilled;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

PSALM 113

PEW BIBLE, 755

LUKE 1:67-80

PEW BIBLE, 1244

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

AN OFFERING OF OUR PLEDGES

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY:** *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow* (to the tune of O Come, O Come Emmanuel) THOMAS KEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

***HYMN OF THE DAY #27:** *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

JOSEPH SIMPSON COOK

Gentle Mary laid her Child
Lowly in a manger;

There He lay, the undefiled,
To the world a stranger.
Such a Babe in such a place,
Can He be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race
Who have found His favor.

Angels sang about His birth;
Wise men sought and found Him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth,
Glory all around Him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,
Heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night,
All the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her Child
Lowly in a manger;
He is still the undefiled,
But no more a stranger.
Son of God, of humble birth,
Beautiful the story;
Praise His Name in all the earth,
Hail the King of glory!

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

"VERY SHORT ADVENT CONFESSION," ALISON ADAM

Let us come together to tell the truth about ourselves.

Creator of light and darkness,
we so often chase shadows
and fail to walk in the light.

Forgive us, O God.

Silence

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

ADAPTED FROM "VERY SHORT ADVENT CONFESSION," ALISON ADAM

We travel through Advent
as a forgive people,
lifting our faces towards the light.
Let us walk together
in love and in faith.

Amen.

We will now process together to the Fellowship Hall for the remainder of our service of Carols and Cookies

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN #41:** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

JOHN FRANCIS WADE

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him,
Born the King of angels!

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing! **[Refrain]**

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*As you enter the Fellowship Hall, please help yourself to cookies, hot chocolate, and find a seat.
We will sing and tell the Christmas story throughout the rest of the service,
feel free to draw, or move around, or get more sweets whenever you would like!*

CAROL #41 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

JOHN FRANCIS WADE

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all
Glory in the highest!

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!

THE WORD IN STORY

CAROL A. WEHRHEIM AND ELIZABETH F. CALDWELL

Selections from *Growing in God's Love*

"How Can This Happen?" (from Luke 1:26-38)

CAROL: *Mercy in a Manager* (Tina Patterson – Solo)

EVAN CRAFT

"A Prophet Is Born" (from Luke 1:5-21, 57-80)

CAROL #37: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

Infant holy, Infant lowly,
for His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging Angels singing,
Noels ringing, Tidings bringing:
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping; Shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new.
Saw the glory, heard the story,
Tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow,

Praises voicing Greet the morrow:
Christ the Babe was born for you.

"A Baby Is Born" (from Luke 2:1-7)

CAROL #53: *What Child is This*

WILLIAM C. DIX

What Child is this who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain:

This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come one and all, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him. **(Refrain)**

"Surprise Visitors" (from Luke 2:8-20)

CAROL #31: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

CHARLES WESLEY

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King.
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that we no more may die.
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth. **(Refrain)**

ADVENT PRAYER

Loving God,

Your Spirit surrounds us in both light and darkness.

Like sunlight, you help us find our way and explore our world.

Like a dark night sky, you give us rest from all the worries of the day.

May we be light for people who need to see hope in this world.

May we be cozy darkness for those who need a safe place to rest.

ILLUSTRATED MINISTRY

*Thank you for the season of Advent and for bringing us together.
Amen.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

CAROL #23: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria, in excelsis Deo;
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song? **(Refrain)**

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. **(Refrain)**

***SENDING**

"RESPONSES AND PRAYER FOR THE SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS," RUTH BURGESS

Trinity of loving,
our end and our beginning,
let your face shine upon us,
let your love be born in us,
bless us with new life.
Amen.

***CHORAL BENEDICTION:** *While We Are Waiting, Come*

While we are waiting, come.
While we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel
While we are waiting, come.

POSTLUDE: *Procession of the Magi*

GEORGE BLAKE

** Please stand in body or spirit.*

This Week's Calendar:

Sunday, December 24th – Fourth Sunday of Advent – Love; Carols and Cookies
9:45 – Adult Sunday School – **No class**

11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)

Sunday, December 24th – Christmas Eve Service & Communion
9:00pm – Worship

Wednesday, December 27th
6:30 – No Choir Practice

Sunday, December 31st – First Sunday of Christmas & Brunch Church
9:45 – Adult Sunday School – **No class**
11:00 – Worship (In-Person & Live Stream)



Session

Moderator: Rev. Jon Phillips

Clerk: Randy Cousins

Treasurer: Glenn Patterson

Class of 2023:

Chip Allen
Randy Cousins
Shelby Smith

Class of 2024:

Karen Maxwell
Kim Snyder
Tracey Troxler

Class of 2025:

Donna Mitchell-Ayers
Tina Patterson
Nancy Purcell

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